DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 336 360 SP 033 271

AUTHOR Hawk, Parmalee P.; Schmidt, Mary W.
TITLE Alternative Teacher Certification: Prospectives and Analysis.
PUB DATE Oct 90
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented to the Consortium for the Advancement of Public Education at the Annual Conference of Deans and Superintendents (1st, Greensboro, NC, October 31, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alternative Teacher Certification; *Beginning Teacher Induction; *Board of Education Policy; *Career Change; Compliance (Legal); Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Mail Surveys; Nontraditional Education; School Districts; Schools of Education; Teaching (Occupation)
IDENTIFIERS *North Carolina

ABSTRACT

In 1985, North Carolina established a program known as the Lateral Entry Policy (LEP), which allows schools to hire non-certified individuals to teach in classrooms. This study was conducted in order to learn more about the individuals, the school systems, and the training process involved in LEP certification. A group of 758 teachers with a lateral entry certificate were identified and a questionnaire exploring policy questions was mailed to them. Of the 682 questionnaires that were delivered, 141 were completed and returned (21 percent). Findings from the study suggest that local school systems are making an effort to hire individuals with degrees in fields closely aligned to the subject or grade in which they are employed to teach. It was also evident that Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) were developing plans of study to meet the individual needs of LEP teachers. One component of the state LEP that appears to be neglected is a required 10-day orientation for new LEP teachers prior to entry into the classroom. Collaborative efforts between IHEs and local systems could begin to rectify this problem. Overall, educators in North Carolina appear to be implementing the policy with integrity. (LL)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED336360

# Alternative Teacher Certification: Prospectives and Analysis

A Paper Presented to the

Consortium for the Advancement of Public Education

First Annual Deans'/Superintendents' Conference

Greensboro, North Carolina

October 31, 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. Hawk

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Parmalee P. Hawk, EdD
Director of Teacher Education
Assistant Professor
East Carolina University
School of Education

Mary W. Schmidt, PhD
Associate Professor
East Carolina University
Department of Special Education
School of Education

SP 033 271



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# North Carolina Alternative Teacher Certification: Prospectives and Analysis

Parmalee P. Hawk and Mary W. Schmidt

East Carolina University

Alternative teacher certification has become a common, yet controversial educational topic in the 1980's. In order to meet projected and existent teacher shortages State certification agencies have had to examine their certification policies. At the same time recent educational reform movements have emphasized the need for classroom teachers to have a strong foundation in their teaching content area (Carnegie Report, 1986; The Holmes Group, 1986; The North Carolina Task Force on Teacher Preparation, 1986). As a result, many different approaches have been designed to provide alternative approaches for teacher certification necessary to meet different needs and criteria (Feiman-Nemser, 1983, 1988; Natriello, Kumwalt, Hanson, & Frish, 1988; Sykes, 1988; Hawk & Schmidt, 1989).

## National Perspective

In 1983, New Jersey was one of the first states to established an alternative certification program. The New Jersey Alternative Path to Certification (APC), focuses on stopping the proliferation of emergency certifications and finding teachers for its urban schools. Candidates for this certification must have a Bachelor's degree, pass a standardized test on the subject they would teach, and complete a one year supervised internship in

the local school district. The Alternative Path Certification has provided a way for New Jersey to recruit and select its future educators. Originally a greater percentage of the APC candidates taught in urban schools (75%). However, recently schools in the suburbs or rural areas have become teaching sites for APC candidates with only 42% teaching in urban schools (Uhler, 1987).

California added the District Intern Certification Program as its fifth certification option in 1983 . Originally a way to train and certify secondary teachers, it now has been expanded to include K through 12 certification. To use this certification option, districts first must state that a fully credentialed teacher is not available for a vacant teaching position. Then they may recruit interns that have a bachelor's degree with a major or minor in the subject they will teach, have passed the California Basic Educational Skills Test, as well as a commission-approved exam for the subject area. Districts must provide guidance and support for these interns through mentor teachers and develop a professional development plan for them. This program, based on standards set by the the state certification agency, includes a 120 clock-hour training component, support and assistance procedures, and annual evaluations (McKibbin, 1988).

The South Carolina Alternative Certification Program was implemented in 1984. It is not a "permanent substitute for traditional teacher education programs," but designed to assist with teacher shortages in science and math (Graham & Millon, 1986). Candidates for this program

must have a bachelor's degree in the certification area that is involved in the teacher shortage, must pass the specialty area of the NTE and participate in a 3 phase training program. This "rigorous pedagogical curriculum" held at an Institution of Higher Education, is based on teacher effectiveness research and on-the-job training teaching in the classroom. Phase 1 of this program is an intensive one-week institute in which the skills most critical to teaching are explored and developed. The second part of this phase is teaching in the classroom with participation in monthly seminars throughout the school year. Phase 2 includes a month of refining teaching skills and participation in summer school teaching in local public schools. Frequent observations and evaluations are also a part of this phase. Phase 3 requires that the candidates must remain in public school teaching and complete three graduate courses that emphasize educational psychology, reading in the secondary school, and education of the exceptional child. Candidates are eligible for full certification upon completion of this three-phase program, an "alternative, not substitute for certification"(Graham & Millon, 1986).

Colorado did not "desire to offer a program for broad scale use of uncertified personnel" (Brown, 1986). This was not necessary since Colorado does not nor does not expect to have a teaching shortage. However, in order to make available outstanding individuals to teaching, there is a process in place that would permit expert individuals with strong foundations in their teaching content area to teach. Colorado has three types of letters of authorization, Type I, recognized expert; Type II, Intern; and Type III

emergency. Type I allows a district school board to fill a position that warrants special expertise not available through a certified teacher with a recognized expert. However before a letter of authorization is issued an intensive program offered by an IHE must be completed (Brown, 1986).

States such as California and South Carolina have recruited uncertified persons with liberal arts degrees in content areas into the teaching profession. It is felt that these individuals, recruited because of their specific content preparation, will be better teachers. However, other states such as New Jersey are faced with the problem of teacher shortages and find it necessary to accept candidates with any bachelor's degree into their teaching force. Individuals are selected that will do an adequate job of filling teacher vacancies in specific geographical or subject areas.

## North Carolina

North Carolina, another state that has a teacher shortage, reports that 75% of its population and 121 of its 134 school systems are rural. These rural school systems are located primarily in the eastern and western part of the state, making the attraction and retention of teachers in these regions an ever present concern (Hawk, Coble, & Swanson, 1985; Hawk & Schmidt, 1989). In order to relieve this problem North Carolina has established two ways for individuals to receive alternative certification - lateral entry and certification-only.

In 1985 North Carolina established an alternative certification program known as the Lateral Entry Policy (LEP). This Lateral Entry Policy allows

schools to hire non-certified individuals to teach in classrooms. These teachers have degrees in areas other than education, but must become certified via alternative routes. In order to participate in the Lateral Entry program candidates must have a bachelor's degree and be selected for employment by a school system. They are to participate in a 10-day orientation prior to entry into the schools that includes effective teacher training, classroom management as well as presentation of school policies and procedures. LE candidates then must have their credentials evaluated by an IHE, affiliate with a university teacher education program, and complete their professional education training within 5 years. While they complete the battery of education classes and pass the National Teachers Examination, LE candidates teach in classrooms. (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1989). Unlike educators in New Jersey, California, and South Carolina, many North Carolina school systems consider the LEP a "last-ditch way to find teachers for hard-to-fill positions because of the lack of training in teaching "(Clarke, 1990, June 24).

The second certification option available to these prospective teachers is to enroll in a certification-only program that takes at least one and one-half years to complete. Many of these programs are not available to individuals changing careers, regardless of their qualifications, because of lack of space and personnel to supervise the required 10-week student teaching experience. Also, this option is not possible for many qualified individuals because of the time required to complete a teacher preparation program, the travel involved

to get to a college or university offering teacher preparation programs, and their inability to stop working and go to classes. For this reason lateral entry is often the preferred alternative route.

## The Study

Since the inception of the Lateral Entry Policy in 1985, the number of teachers in North Carolina that have entered teaching and received certification through this process has increased steadily. Table 1 shows the number of lateral entry certificates issued over the last 6 years and the corresponding percentage of the newly certified personnel as reported by the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction Certification Section.

Table 1: Number of Lateral Entry Certificates Issued
and Corresponding Percentage of Newly Certified Personnel

| 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 200 | 246 | 232 | 421 | 508 |
| .4% | 3.5% | 5% | 4.1% | 6.4% | 7.3% |

In November 1989, the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction identified 758 teachers who were presently teaching with a lateral entry certificate. In an effort to learn more about the individuals, the school

systems, and the training process involved in LEP certification, a questionnaire was prepared and mailed to these identified lateral entry teachers in February 1990. Seventy-six of the questionnaires were returned marked "addressee unknown". Of the 682 that were delivered, 141 were completed for a return rate of 21%.

Questions

This study was conducted in an effort to answer three groups of questions concerning the Lateral Entry Policy in North Carolina. First, "Who are the people seeking certification via LEP? In what areas are they seeking certification? What previous degrees do they hold? How old are they? Are they making mid-career changes?'

The second group was, "Are the local school systems complying with the Lateral Entry Policy?" Are they hiring only people who have degrees in fields related to their teaching assignments? Are they providing 10 days of orientation prior to LE teachers entering the classrooms? Are they providing technical support to the LE teachers?"

The third question group was "What kind of requirements are Institutions of Higher Education demanding?, How many hours of course work were IHEs assigning? Was there diversity among IHEs? Did the LE teachers perceive their coursework beneficial?"

Question 1.

President Bush refers to alternative certification opportunities as "mid-career decisions" to enter the teaching profession (Education Research

Bulletin, 1989). Of the 141 respondents to the questionnaire more than 50% were younger than 35 (under 25 years of age - 6; 25-29 years - 38; 30-34 years - 32; 35-39 years - 25; 40-45 years - 23; and over 45 years of age - 14). These data would suggest career changes were being made, but not necessarily during the mid-career years.

North Carolina's LEP was written primarily to provide classroom teachers in subject areas of scarcity. These areas include art, foreign languages, math, science, and special education. Dance and drama became areas of scarcity when the State implemented a Basic Education Program that required those areas of study. Table 2 reports that 63% of the responding LE teachers were employed for areas of scarcity.

Table 2 also shows the undergraduate degrees held by the LE teachers seeking certification in each area. Column 3 reports the number of LE teachers with degrees in either the same or closely related content areas. Column 4 identifies the degrees that were unrelated to the areas of certification. Of those responding, 83% of the LE teachers held degrees in the same content areas that they were seeking certification or in closely related content areas.

In the certification areas of counseling and special education, degrees in psychology, social work, and sociology were considered closely related fields of study. Six of those respondents identified as 'other' were employed as in-school suspension teachers. These teachers must be certified, but no specific area of certification is designated. All of the LE teachers reported teaching in

Table 2: Number of Respondents Seeking Various Certifications and Their Prior Degrees

| Area of Certification | No. | Undergrad Degree in Content Same/related | Other Degree |
|---|---|---|---|
| Art* | 14 | 10 | Sociology, Religion, English |
| Dance* | 4 | 4 | |
| Theater* | 8 | 8 | |
| Foreign Languages* | 20 | 14 | Science, Radio/TV, Sociology (3), Economics |
| History | 7 | 6 | Sociology |
| Mathematics* | 9 | 7 | Business Administration, Home Economics |
| Science* | 11 | 11 | Textile Technology |
| Special Education* | 4 | 4 | |
| Counseling | 19 | 15 | English, History, Recreation, Bus. Adm. |
| Elementary | 5 | 3 | Pol. Sci., Bus. Adm. |
| English | 4 | 3 | Zoology |
| Music | 2 | 2 | |
| Physical Education | 3 | 3 | |
| Voc./Business Education | 4 | 4 | |
| Other | 27 | 23 | |

* Denotes area of scarcity

the same areas in which they were seeking certification with one exception. This teacher was seeking certification in science and was teaching language arts and math.

Question 2:

The North Carolina Lateral Entry Policy states that 10 days of orientation should be provided to LE teachers prior to entry into the classroom. The key phrase is "prior to entry" and is the most difficult aspect of the policy to comply with for school systems. Lateral Entry teachers are hired throughout the school year and often on very short notice. The responses to this area of the questionnaire verify the difficulty school systems have in complying with the 10 days of orientation prior to entry into the classroom.

Half (72) of the LE teachers reported having an orientation in their school prior to entering the classroom. All but six of the respondents reported having some introduction to teaching throughout the school year. However, only 11 reported having more than five days of pre-service orientation.Many of the LE teachers attended workshops during the school year. Ninety of the respondents reported participating in the North Carolina Effective Teaching Training Program.

The LE teachers were asked if a support team had been assigned to assist them during their entry years. Eighty-four percent or 118 of those responding said they were assigned a support team. In the majority of

instances (69) the support team was composed of either the school principal or assistant principal and a mentor teacher.

Formal observations are a part of all beginning teachers' evaluations. The times that the LE teachers were formally observed during a year ranged from none (5) to 19 (1). Table 3 reports the frequency of formal observations. Approximately 87% of the LE teachers were formally observed three or more times during the year. In a few cases (4) the number of observations decreased during the second and third years of teaching.

Table 3: Number of Formal Observations Per Year

| Number of Observations | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Respondents | 5 | 4 | 10 | 61 | 27 | 24 |

Question 3

There were 26 institutions of higher education (IHEs) which had developed plans of study for the responding LE teachers. Of the 141 respondents, 36 of them had a plan of study from East Carolina University, 14 from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 12 from the University of

North Carolina at Greensboro, 9 from Pembroke, and lesser numbers of plans from the remaining 22 IHEs.

The range of semester hours required by IHEs for certification was from 3 to 66. When the data related to the number of semester hours required by the IHEs was analyzed, some trends and some variations emerged. One trend was when plans of study were in excess of 30 semester hours one of the following was true:

- The LE teacher was seeking certification in an area that required an advanced degree such as Counseling, Library Science, Speech Pathology, and School Psychology.
- The LE teacher was seeking certification in Special Education or School Social Work.
- The LE teacher had a degree in an area unrelated to the area of certification being sought (i.e. religion degree seeking Art certification, math degree seeking Music certification, textile technology degree seeking Math certification).

Another trend that surfaced was that IHEs appeared to have their own range of semester hours for plans of study for certification areas other than those mentioned above. The following list shows examples of those ranges:

| Institution | Range |
|---|---|
| Appalachian State University | 21 - 40 s.h. |
| East Carolina University | 12 - 30 s.h. |
| UNC-Charlotte | 24 - 30 s. |
| UNC-Greensboro | 12 - 30 s.h. |
| Pembroke | 21 - 40 s.h. |
| Fayetteville State University | 9 - 16 s.h |

These ranges may be related to the number of professional education hours required at the respective institutions.

When analyzing institutions' credit hour requirements for specific areas of certification, it appears that plans of study are developed as individual cases. For example, one IHE developed a plan of study in School Social Work for one LE teacher that required only 3 semester hours. That LE teacher's degree was in psychology and correctional services. At the same institution a plan of study in School Social Work was developed that required 56 semester hours. That LE teacher's undergraduate degree was in history. This variation in plans of study was evident in numerous instances, attesting to the evaluation of transcripts on an individual basis

When LE teachers were asked to "List the course(s) taken to meet certification requirements that have been most helpful" 67 courses were cited. The number of responses to these choices ranged from 14 (Introduction to Exceptional Children), 11 (Educational Psychology), 9 (Reading in the Content

Area) to one response to 37 diverse courses. When LE teachers were asked to "List the course(s) taken to meet certification requirements that have been least helpful" 36 courses were cited. The number of responses to these choices ranged from 21 (Educational Foundations, History and Philosophy ), 5 (Reading in the Content Area) , 3 (Introduction to Exceptional Children and Computers) to one response to 22 diverse courses. The diversity of responses makes it impossible to make any general statements about the benefits of any particular course. However, in analyzing the LE teachers responses, courses that were relevant to their classrooms and teaching practices were believed to be most helpful. Courses that were not applicable to actual classroom management or instruction, were perceived as least helpful.

Discussion

The 758 North Carolina LE teachers and the schools in which they were teaching were identified by the State Department of Public Instruction. Ten percent of the questionnaires sent were unable to be delivered. This would indicate that either the LE teachers had changed schools, left the profession, or the SDPI list of LE teachers and where they are was not accurate. It should also be noted that the return rate of 21% is a limitation of this study and that generalizations cannot be made. However, some observations can be made related to data provided by the 141 respondents.

It would appear that people of all ages and from a wide variety of academic backgrounds are interested in entering the teaching force. LE teachers are being employed and seeking certification in all areas, not just

areas of scarcity. From this study it also appears that most of the LE teachers (83%) have degrees in either the content areas that they are seeking certification or in closely related fields of study. The LE teachers, with seven exceptions, are also teaching the same subjects and grades in which their future certifications will be earned

The respondents reported that school systems were not providing 10 days of orientation to the LE teachers prior to their entrance into the classroom. Half did receive some orientation, but less than 8% received more than five days of orientation before they began teaching. The 10-day orientation period prior to entry into the classroom is an important and necessary component of the Lateral Entry Policy. Ten days is not adequate preparation for an individual to begin teaching, but it does provide LE teachers with an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the school environment. Unfortunately, even this minimal preparation is not being provided. True, school systems need teachers in classrooms, but children also deserve teachers who have some understanding of the environment and some grasp of how to manage a classroom and instruction.

The LE teachers in this study did receive assistance from their school systems in the form of support teams and workshops. Two thirds of them participated in the Effective Teaching Training Program and all but five were formally observed. The formal observation process should provide feedback to LE teachers and in that manner help to improve their instructional and management skills.

The respondents received their LE plans of study from 26 IHEs. Although there were some variations in requirements, in the large majority of cases they did not seem to be excessive. In most instances where the plans of study were more than 30 semester hours the LE teachers were seeking certification in areas that required advanced degrees such as speech pathology or counseling. When certification was sought in special education, social work, or an unrelated area 30 hours or more were often required. However most LE plans of study contained 9 to 28 semester hours of coursework.

As the LE teachers completed their plans of study, courses that were relevant to the classroom were perceived as being helpful while those less practical were seen as least helpful. Relevance and applicability appeared to be the prime determinants in the evaluation of course content. This supports findings from a previous study with LE teachers ( Hawk & Schmidt, 1989).

Conclusions

It was evident from this study of 141 LE teachers, that local school systems were making a sincere effort to hire individuals that had degrees in fields that were closely aligned to the subject or grade in which they were employed to teach. It was also evident that IHEs were developing plans of study to meet the individual needs of the LE teachers. The credit hours in these plans of study did not appear excessive and in most instances contained the minimum hours normally reflected in the professional studies component of a traditional program.

The component of the State LE policy that most often appears to be forgotten is the required 10 day orientation for new LE teachers "prior to entry" into the classroom. This vital part of a teacher's induction cannot be ignored. Although this policy is difficult for the local schools to implement collaborative efforts between IHEs and local school systems could begin to rectify this problem.

The North Carolina Lateral Entry Policy has not been in effect long enough to provide data on the effectiveness of LE teachers and their attrition rate. Nor is there data that suggests LE teachers are as effective as traditionally prepared teachers. However, lateral entry certification is here to stay and from the information gathered in this study, educators in North Carolina seem to be implementing the policy with considerable integrity.

References

A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (1986). New York: The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy.

Brown, H. (1986). Alternatives to certification. (Issue Paper #8602). Denver, CO: Colorado State Department of Education.

Clarke, R. (1990, June 24). Certification impedes path to teaching. News and Observer, pp. 1, 8A.

Education Research Bulletin. (1989). Washington, DC, pp. 94.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1983). Learning to teach. In L. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), Handbook of Teaching and Policy, (pp. 150-170). New York: Longman.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1988, April). Forms of teacher preparation. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Graham, P.L. & Million, S.K. (1986). Overcoming teacher shortages: The South Carolina alternative certification program. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education, Denver, CO, 1985, November.

Hawk, P., Coble, C. & Swanson, M. (1985). Certification: It does matter. Journal of Teacher Education, 36, 12-16.

Hawk, P., & Schmidt, M.W. (1989). Teacher preparation: A comparison of traditional and alternative programs. Journal of Teacher Education, 40 (5), 53-58.

McKibbin, M.D. (1988). Alternative certification in California. Teacher Education Quarterly, 10 (3), 41-45.

Natriello, G., Zumwalt, K., Hansen, A. , & Frisch, A. (1988, April). Who is choosing different routes into teaching? Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (1989). Certification manual: North Carolina professional school personnel. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Sykes, G. (1988, April). Implications of the Carnegie and Holmes proposals on future forms of teacher preparation. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

The Education of North Carolina's Teachers. (1986). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina General Administration, Task Force on the Preparation of Teachers.

Tomorrow's Teachers. (1986). East Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group.

Uhler, S. (1987, April). Alternative paths to entry: New Jersey and elsewhere. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC.